

ARE WE A . .
LOGICAL PEOPLE ?

NATIVE RACES
AND THE
: GREAT WAR. :

A LETTER TO YOU FROM

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

Mr. W. P. Schreiner, K.C., at the Dinner of the African Society, recently given in his honour, said :—

“The natives have their grievances of course, and I do not wish to discuss them here. But they know where their friends are, and they know that they are on our side.”

“The natives of South Africa deserve the very greatest credit, and I am saying nothing which is indiscreet when I say that we OWE TO THEM A DEBT OF GRATITUDE.

THE ANTI-SLAVERY AND ABORIGINES PROTECTION ——— SOCIETY. ———

BY

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON.

A few months ago I read in the *Morning Post* an interview with Mr. Roosevelt, which contained the inference—astonishing as coming from Mr. Roosevelt—that he did not approve of Aborigines Protection Societies. Perhaps he was misunderstood by his interlocutor. But inasmuch as a good deal of the conversation dealt with Mr. Roosevelt's sympathies in regard to these subject and backward races towards whom the United States is endeavouring to act as a kindly guardian, his alleged sneering reference to Aborigines Protection Societies

seems to me quite illogical. He must surely be aware of the work of Hampton and similar Institutes, and the effect that the new attitude of the United States since 1870 has had on the uplift of the Amerindians within the United States' borders? They are increasing, not diminishing; yet they are tending to disappear as separate human types. Education and a civilised method of existence have almost entirely removed the racial bar to inter-mixture with the white.

Yet because the sentiments (wrongly attributed, as it turned out) to Mr. Roosevelt are really still held by quite a number of persons reputed intelligent, observant and far-sighted, I propose to say a few words about our own Aborigines Protection Society, and to refer to the newly-founded sister Society at Boston.

If there is any logic in our imperialism and belief in our mission as a great ruling power over hundreds

of millions of infinitely diverse races, there is no association that should be more thoroughly supported by convinced Imperialists than that for the protection of Aborigines, with its head-quarters in London. Their contributions to its funds would be a kind of insurance. With this Society in full activity, citizens of Great Britain and Ireland might cease to be anxious as to our doings in India, Africa, Oceania or Tropical America.

The Aborigines Protection Society was founded in 1838 as the outcome of a Royal Commission; and owed its institution and its subsequent growth of influence to the wide-spread horror or disapproval felt in England between 1820 and 1850, over the extermination of the Tasmanian aborigines, of the Beothuks of Newfoundland, the alleged oppression of the Kafirs in South Africa, and of the Maories in New Zealand, and the threatened elimination of the dark-

skinned Australoid from the island-continent of Australia.

The effect of the Policy inculcated by the Aborigines Protection Society—never, I should like to assert, a purely sentimental one, but with a sound practical basis—is making itself seen in the results of the present war, a war deliberately prepared and engineered by Germany, as we now know, with the object of breaking up the British Empire. Germany, knowing how the native races of Africa resented her own presence in that continent, counted on a similar hatred of British and French domination over the backward Caucasians or the non-Caucasian peoples of the Old World. She looked for far-spread insurrection in India, revolts in Egypt and the Sudan, risings against the French in Tunis, Algeria and Morocco, a rebellion of Boer against Briton, and Negro against white man in South Africa. Possibly, if there had

been for eighty years no Aborigines Protection Society in Great Britain, with its *répercussion* on French opinion (and for aught I know there are similar societies in Paris which look after the interests of the coloured peoples), Germany's forecast might have been justified. As it is, and because of the long-established propaganda of the Aborigines Protection Society, Egypt knows on which side its bread is buttered; India is willing to defer discussion of its diverse views as to measures of self-government, and buckle on its armour for the defence of the Empire in general; the natives of the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Uganda, East Africa, Zanzibar, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, are intensely loyal; those of South Africa are putting British interests first and foremost even before their own unsettled land and suffrage problems; while in Malaysia, in Fiji, and the other Pacific islands under the British flag; in British Arabia

and the Persian Gulf; in Ceylon and in the West Indies, the coloured races are showing themselves intensely solicitous for the victory of the British arms.

And all this, I repeat, is in great measure due to the work, and the beliefs which underlie that work, of the Aborigines Protection Society: an association which from time to time has numbered great statesmen among its officers and its subscribers.

The public outside the Council of that Society has little idea of its activities and its influence. It is so much in accord with, so little differing from the policy of Downing Street and Whitehall, that it is seldom brought into the prominence of a Press notice by conflict with the rulers of the Empire, principal and subordinate. Its principles and its theories have long since been adopted by the Imperial Government. The Society receives from all quarters of

the globe complaints and representations as to acts of tyranny, injustice, tactlessness, cruelty, where aboriginal races are concerned. It sifts such complaints very carefully. Those that have no real foundation get no farther than its waste paper basket; those that would seem to be well-founded are passed on to the Government Departments, the companies, the associations, or individuals concerned. In nine cases out of ten—at any rate so far as the British Dominions are in question—the persons addressed are able either to rebut the accusation, or having looked into it and admitted its veracity, to redress the grievance. Not infrequently they thank the Society for having called their attention to the incident before it had attained publicity. About once in five years the zeal of the Society appears to outrun its discretion where the rule of foreign countries is concerned, and the Foreign office may administer a mild rebuke in the

speech or the despatch of a Minister or Under-Secretary. But in such cases it more often happens, not that the Society has exaggerated or been misinformed, but that it is not possible for Great Britain to act as governess or policeman the wide world over, especially where the susceptibilities of great powers are concerned.

There was with some of us a feeling that the United States stood in the way of the abolition of Putumayo possibilities, and of British interference on behalf of the "Aboriginal" subjects of Tropical American republics. The British Aborigines Protection Society therefore has been striving to use its influence on the other side of the Atlantic to promote the creation of a sister society at Boston, with branches at other American centres of learning and philosophy. We felt that the treatment of the Amerindian aborigines by the ruling caste in several of the Central and South

American Republics was so bad that its economic effects—to say nothing of the injury to sentiment and science—would before long be felt by all the civilised peoples of the world who had invested their capital (or the enterprise of their citizens) in the development of Tropical American resources. Yet we were aware that whenever our Government had endeavoured to use its influence with certain South American republics to enlarge the liberties of the Amerindian and to restrain excessive and cruel exploitation of their labour or their property, we were blocked by the diplomacy of the United States. This attitude was the more exasperating because as often as not the information (afterwards proved to be absolutely true), had been in the first instance conveyed to the Society by United States' citizens. Such informers have faced official enquiries, have stood by their guns, and proved their assertions to the hilt. But the Govern-

ment of Washington has shown itself increasingly jealous of any European intervention in the affairs of the New World. Without subscribing to the Monroe Doctrine—for the Aborigines Protection Society has no politics or partisanship—it was nevertheless felt that it would be more appropriate for the United States—the dominant power in the New World—to have an Aborigines Protection Society of its own. Perhaps—even—one in which Canada could participate.

And that if such a Society with its offices not only at Boston, but at Ottawa, Chicago, Toronto, New York, Washington, Victoria, San Francisco, Tuskegee and Galveston, constituted itself the guardian of the persecuted Amerindians of Central and South America, its representations when proved to be true would receive much more effective diplomatic support from the United States than if they were tendered from London. All that

our Society wishes to achieve is to save the fifteen or sixteen millions of Amerindians still inhabiting Central and South America from gradual destruction.* It views with pleasure and approval the general treatment by Brazil of its large Amerindian population, and realises that it is in consequence fusing by degrees in the Brazilian people and is producing such eminent exemplars as that Colonel Rondon who lately served as guide to Mr. Roosevelt through unexplored Brazil. And it wishes to accomplish this object not only because it believes it to be inherently

* The extraordinary callousness of our own countrymen in regard to the Amerindian, and the possibility of "Putumayo" scandals arising at any time, and the need for watchful supervision over all "whitemen" in wild parts of South America is shewn in the March number of the *Geographical Journal*. Here an Englishman, Major Fawcett, in referring to the "brutality" of a certain tribe, states that it leaves for trial "no possible measure but extinction"—why? Why not try missionaries first?

wrong to destroy any type of man, beast, or bird which is not harmful to the community [and that for many reasons the science of anthropology would be greatly the poorer by the destruction of that blend of proto-Caucasian and proto-Mongol which we call the Amerindian]; but that these Amerindians are peculiarly useful, peculiarly well adapted for the development of Tropical America. They are artistic to the finger-tips, and when rightly educated produce the Colonel Rondons whom Mr. Roosevelt so warmly praises—or, if you ask for masterfulness, the Porfirio Diazes, and the few other really great leaders and patriots in the history of the Spanish-speaking republics of Tropical America.

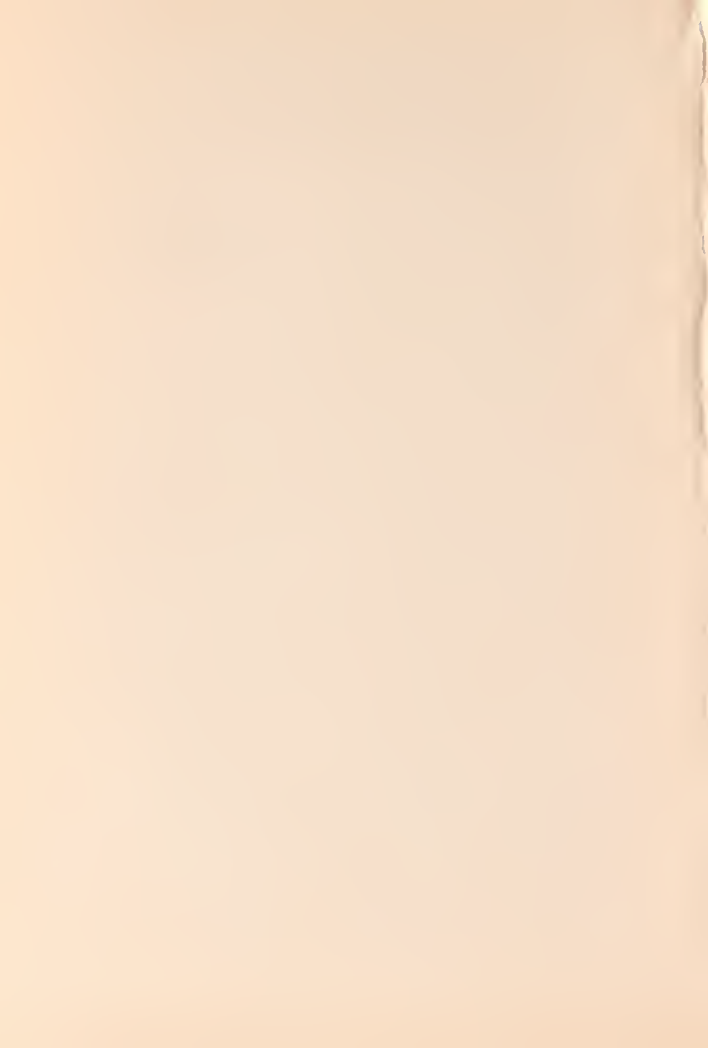
If we were a logical people, sufficiently well read in history and the lessons of history, each one of us who could afford the modest subscription of a few shillings would be

a member of the Aborigines Protection Society, the most purely philanthropic organization which exists in our land at the present day. We see the effect of the eighty years' work of this Society in the condition of the British Empire in Africa and Asia since the German declaration of war.

We have been and shall be compelled by the very circumstances of the case to take over in wardship considerable areas of Africa and Asia, hitherto administered or controlled by Germany. It is essential that we make our administration of such lands better than the by-no-means bad work of Germany which preceded it. It is therefore more than ever necessary that the British public should ensure itself against failure as the foremost governing people in the world, by supporting the work and enlarging the scope of the Aborigines Protection Society.

H. H. JOHNSTON.

April 21st, 1915.





THE
Anti-Slavery & Aborigines Protection Society

President :—

SIR THOMAS FOWELL BUXTON, BART., G.C.M.G.

Chairman :—

HON. J. C. LYTTTELTON, M.P.

Treasurers :—

SIR COLIN SCOTT MONCRIEFF, K.C.M.G.

E. WRIGHT BROOKS, ESQ., J.P.

Secretary :—

TRAVERS BUXTON, M.A.

Organising Secretaries :—

REV. J. H. AND MRS. HARRIS.

Parliamentary Committee :—

Chairman : RT. HON. J. W. WILSON, M.P.

Conveners :

NOEL BUXTON, ESQ., M.P.

T. E. HARVEY, ESQ., M.P.

HON. J. C. LYTTTELTON, M.P.

J. R. MACDONALD, ESQ., M.P.

Bankers :—

Messrs. BARCLAY & Co., LTD., 95, Victoria Street, S.W.

Auditors :—

Messrs. SELLARS, DICKSEE & Co., 296-302, High Holborn, W.C.

Offices :— 51, DENISON HOUSE,
VAUXHALL BRIDGE ROAD,
LONDON, S.W.